

May 21, 2018

Flood Waters Pose Health Risks

Contact:

Kevin Watler
Public Information Officer
Florida Department of Health in Hillsborough County
kevin.watler@flhealth.gov
(813) 298-2024, cell



Tampa, Fla. – The Florida Department of Health in Hillsborough County is urging residents to avoid direct contact with flood waters. Flood waters or standing waters may contain fecal matter from sewage systems, and septic tanks, agricultural and industrial waste and other bacteria.

There may also be unseen hazards under the water. Flood waters can also mask debris, downed power lines and other hazards.

Basic hygiene is very important. Always wash your hands with soap and water after helping in cleanup activities and after handling items contaminated by floodwater or sewage.

If you have open cuts or sores exposed to the floodwater, keep them as clean as possible by washing them with soap and disinfected or boiled then cooled water. Apply antibiotic cream to reduce the risk of infection. If a wound or sore develops redness, swelling or drainage, see a physician immediately.

Do not allow children to play in floodwater. They can be exposed to water contaminated with fecal matter.

Do not allow children to play with toys that have been in floodwater until the toys have been disinfected. Use 1/4 cup of bleach in one gallon of water to disinfect toys and other items.

If you're on a septic system and your plumbing is functioning slowly or sluggishly, you should conserve water as much as possible. The less water used, the less sewage the septic tank must process. Minimize use of your washing machine. Do not have the septic tank pumped. Exceptionally high-water tables might crush a septic tank that was pumped dry. If the fundamental problem is high ground water, pumping the tank does nothing to solve that problem.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts. Follow us on Twitter at [@DOHHillsborough](https://twitter.com/DOHHillsborough) and on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/DOHHillsborough). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit www.FloridaHealth.gov.

###